

Colorado Greater Sage-Grouse Comment Submissions via ePlanning Web Form

Submission ID	Subject	Submission Text
CO-GRSG-1-210273	Maintain existing plan	I would like to see the Dept of the Interior maintain its current plan to manage the Sage Grouse. It was a collaborative effort that seems to be working.
CO-GRSG-1-210386	Changes Premature	Changes to the existing management plans regarding sage grouse are premature. Just a few years ago, plans were developed with a variety of stakeholders, state by state. Any changes to these plans are premature. More time should be allowed to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of these plans.
CO-GRSG-1-211282	Respect for Life	<p>I read with dismay the news that the conservation plan for the Sage Grouse in northwestern Colorado may be compromised by those seeking to rape the only land that Sage Grouse can make their living on. This is mostly an effort by Republicans to enable their donors to make a buck through energy extraction. This is nonsensical when he United States and the world is glutted with oil cheaper than we can produce ourselves.</p> <p>Republicans champion themselves as ProLife advocates. Advocating for human life is only half the answer, for human fetuses would not and could not exist without a vast web of nonhuman plant and animal organisms supporting them.</p> <p>ALL forms of life must be respected and protected in order to truly respect and protect human life, and that respect must extend to the Sage Grouse and their supporting habitat. Any further encroachments on the Sage Grouse’s habitat will compromise the very existence of the species.</p> <p>Who exactly do you think you are Republicans, that you feel so empowered to wipe another species off the face of the earth with your greed and callousness? You had better think twice before pulling the trigger to kill off the Sage Grouse and the other species you are now threatening across the country with your immoral thinking and resultant policies. Disgusting disrespect for life itself.</p>
CO-GRSG-1-211284	No more oil and gas leasing	We don’t need to be giving away cheap subsurface rights that destroy the value of the surrounding lands and recreation. Keep those harmful chemicals, heavy metals, and VOC’s in the ground!
CO-GRSG-1-216137	Maintain current NSO	I am writing to suggest that the sage grouse protection plan as currently drafted should be maintained. Providing any opportunity for interpretation that could open the current 200,000 plus acres of “off limit “ habitat to development should not be permitted. The only reason for doing so is to provide opportunity for extraction. The economic impact assessment from what I could see only captured the benefit from drilling and does not accurately reflect the economic value of recreation, tourism, and the value of land in its natural state. If anything given development and the lose of habitat resulting from increased fire activity (resulting from warming caused by burning fossil fuels) the amount of protected habitat should be increased. Thank you
CO-GRSG-1-216182	Measure three times, saw once: Ben Franklin	<p>For several years, stakeholders discussed, met, and analyzed the need for a thoughtful collaborative approach to Sage Grouse preservation. After much deliberation they came up with a solid sensible plan. Now your agency proposes to upend this and with very little time advance a new plan. Why? I urge you to stay with the current plan of action that was developed with painstaking and thoughtful input from a wide variety of stakeholders.</p> <p>Stay the course, and respect the work that was done to come up with a sensible and fair plan to conserve the Sage Grouse while providing access for other uses as well.</p> <p>The Western Sage Grouse is an iconic Western species that is in great peril. Greater-sage-grouse used to number in the millions across the West, but energy development, fire, invasive species like cheatgrass and urbanization have diminished its habitat as well as its numbers, now somewhere below a half million total. Another answer is that greater-sage-grouse are a bellwether species whose fate is intertwined with the more than 350 species that rely on sagebrush lands. These lands provide crucial winter range and migration corridors for big game, including pronghorn, elk and mule deer. All the species would benefit from the greater sage-grouse conservation plans and stand to lose if the plans are weakened. Indeed, many around the West see sage-grouse as the canary in the coal mine for the health of these iconic lands.</p> <p>Thank you,</p> <p>Deirdre Macnab</p> <p>4M Ranch Meeker, Colorado</p>

Colorado Greater Sage-Grouse Comment Submissions via ePlanning Web Form

Submission ID	Subject	Submission Text
CO-GRSG-1-216283	please take action	<p>Secretary Zinke is breaking a deal made by westerners and federal officials</p> <p>After nearly a decade of hard work from westerners to draft the 2015 Sage Grouse plans, Secretary Zinke and the Department of the Interior announced major changes that undermine years of hard work and compromise. This action breaks the deal that federal officials made with western states in 2015, when the plans were originally finalized.</p> <p>The changes to the plans imperil the health of the sage grouse and the 350 species of animals and plants that depend on a healthy sagebrush. The amendments to the plans gut some of the most important protections for the sage grouse. Specifically, Secretary Zinke took an ax to most of the Sage Grouse Focal Areas which protected over 8.7 million acres of vital habitat. In Wyoming and Utah oil and gas companies no longer have to prioritize development outside of sage-grouse habitat, even though studies have found that areas with the most potential for development fall outside of sage grouse habitat. In Montana, Secretary Zinke directly ignored Gov. Bullock “s opposition and went ahead and made significant changes to sage-grouse management in southwest Montana.</p> <p>This proposal ignores overwhelming public input urging the BLM and Forest Service to leave the plans alone.</p> <p>The amendments also ignore the roughly 400,000 public comments that both the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and U.S. Forest Service (USFS) received during their respective public comment periods urging both agencies to honor the deal, let the collaborative plans work, and support the common ground established among a diverse group of stakeholders in the 2015 plans.</p> <p>By ignoring westerners and science, Secretary Zinke is threatening the survival of the sage-grouse and undermining certainty for businesses that depend on a healthy and working sagebrush landscape.</p> <p>Contrary to public sentiment and the weight of peer-reviewed science, Secretary Zinke “s proposed changes to the plans will cause great uncertainty for western business owners, ranchers, hunters and everyone who values honest, consensus driven management of habitat and public lands. This move could also impact and cause declines in over 350 species of animals and plants that depend on the “big empty” of the sagebrush sea &ndash; habitat that drives over \$1 billion in outdoor related economic activity in the rural west.</p> <p>Secretary Zinke “s changes will harm the sage-grouse, putting it on a path towards the Endangered Species Act, exactly the outcome these plans were designed to prevent.</p> <p>Most importantly, Secretary Zinke “s proposed changes would move the west backwards and set the sage-grouse down a path toward needing a listing under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), all as a favor to a couple of states. The original plans were specifically created to commit to conservation and avoid the need for an ESA listing, and cited by Fish and Wildlife biologists as the reason an ESA listing was no longer warranted at the time (after having found the previous state of affairs did require listing). Now, political favors to industry and a few elected officials threatens the certainty of the deal. The West deserves better.</p> <p>Secretary Zinke should listen to Westerners, abandon his unpopular plans, and honor the deal to protect the sage-grouse.</p> <p>Instead of implementing changes to the plans that would be devastating for the sage-grouse and the entire sagebrush-steppe ecosystem, Secretary Zinke must honor the deal that Interior made with westerners in 2015. Westerners still abide by handshake deals. For Secretary Zinke to mandate a drastic overhaul without public support and call for a do-over after so many westerners worked together for years to craft the plans is an insult to all who value public lands, local economies and wildlife. Westerners won “t forget this and Secretary Zinke will own the consequences of his horrible actions.</p>
CO-GRSG-1-216359	Opposition to Plan Revisions to Roll-back existing protections	<p>As someone who cares about birds and the places they need, and as a professional biologist who spent their entire 35+ year career in conservation science, I strongly oppose any efforts to weaken the conservation protections in the Bureau of Land Management’s (BLM) sage-grouse land management plans. These birds are part of an iconic western ecosystem, the sagebrush habitat, which supports over 350 species including Golden Eagles and mule deer. They are an important part of our heritage.</p> <p>In 2010, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) determined that the Greater Sage-Grouse populations were in serious trouble and warranted protection under the</p>

Colorado Greater Sage-Grouse Comment Submissions via ePlanning Web Form

Submission ID	Subject	Submission Text
		<p>Endangered Species Act (ESA).</p> <p>An unprecedented numbers of stakeholders across the West worked for many years on ensuring that sage-grouse management is based on science and good for our local economies. The plans that were agreed to in 2015 led the FWS to reverse its 2010 decision and find the future for sage-grouse was secure: a historic victory for conservation and for collaboration.</p> <p>Instead of amending the plans by weakening protections, pointedly prioritizing oil and gas development over protected species, BLM should focus on engaging communities in the decisions necessary to implement the plans as they are. Give the plans a chance to work. The recently issues Instruction Memoranda generally retreat from the protections set out in previous guidance to field staff in 2016. The first IM, issued in December 2017, reverses existing policy, directing BLM field offices to prioritize oil and natural gas leasing and drilling projects outside of the most sensitive sage grouse habitat. Instead, it states that BLM “does not need to lease and develop outside of [grouse] habitat management areas before considering any leasing and development within [grouse] habitat.” The second IM, issued in January 2018, eliminates requirements for public notice and comment “when conditions worsen and there is a need for action” under adaptive management provisions in the grouse plans. It also shortens the public protest period for oil and gas lease sale parcels to 10 days from 30 days</p> <p>If there are any changes that experts deem necessary, these should instead be done via minor plan amendments, also known as “maintenance actions.” A complete rewrite is an unnecessary waste of federal resources, and risks upending the official finding made by the FWS that a listing under the ESA is not needed.</p> <p>These federal management plans must keep key elements that biologists believe are necessary to avoid the need for listing the species under the ESA. Specifically:</p> <p>Development on existing leases should be managed per regulations that are currently in place, which limit surface occupancy and disturbance. Years of research leave no doubt that sage-grouse do not do well in close proximity to energy development. More development in the most important habitat will not help conserve the species.</p> <p>Good mitigation policy and practice is one of the best opportunities to achieve sustainable development and conservation goals. Where impacts cannot be avoided or minimized, well-designed compensatory mitigation programs can achieve the multiple-use, sustained yield objectives.</p> <p>Do not strip the fundamental mitigation goal of “net conservation gain” from the plans. A no net loss of habitat merely prevents additional habitat loss and is not adequate to achieve long-term conservation of sage-grouse.</p> <p>Improve plan monitoring and oversight, including providing training to field staff and the necessary incentives to ensure proper implementation. The plans should contain metrics by which conservation success can be measured. Conservation metrics will help in effective management of the habitat and reduce wasting personnel time and limited funds.</p> <p>The plans contain many new provisions that serve as loopholes and exceptions to habitat protections. We need certainty that crucial habitat will be protected to ensure the species thrives into the future. If the revisions are adopted, thousands of wells could move into the species core habitats, potentially leading to a listing of the species as endangered</p> <p>Thank you for considering my comments.</p>
CO-GRSG-1-217333	Leave the 2015 greater sage grouse plans alone	Nearly a decade of collaborative work by diverse interests in Colorado and the Governor resulted in a good compromise Colorado Plan in 2015 to conserve the greater sage grouse in northwest Colorado. This Plan, in conjunction with similar plans in other western states, led US Fish and Wildlife Service to determine the greater sage grouse no longer warranted becoming listed under the Endangered Species Act.
CO-GRSG-1-217339	Undefined	Took twenty years to come up with a plan. Don’t assume you are smarter than everyone else and change it. Guarantee you are not, only more compromised.
CO-GRSG-1-217340	Keep 2015 Colorado Sage Grouse Plan intact	i am a Colorado Wildlife Federation member and I am writing to urge you to keep the 2015 Colorado Sage Grouse Plan intact. Diverse stakeholders worked for nearly a decade to develop the plan and it should not be changed.

Colorado Greater Sage-Grouse Comment Submissions via ePlanning Web Form

Submission ID	Subject	Submission Text
		Sincerely, Mary Claire Collins
CO-GRSG-1-217382	Keep the No Change Alternative	I want the NO CHANGE Alternative adopted. Colorado’s citizens and state and Federal agencies worked out this very satisfactory plan.
CO-GRSG-1-217482	BLM Draft RMPA/EIS for Northwest Colorado	<p>Many organizations including the Colorado Wildlife Federation and the National Audubon Society, to both of which I belong, and State and federal agencies in Colorado spent the better part of a decade putting together a resource plan for the Greater Sage Grouse (GRSG) in our state; this plan was published in 2015. I urge BLM to retain this 2015 Greater Sage Grouse plan as is, as it reflects state and local input and would enlist all stakeholders in an effort to protect and maintain GRSG populations while also allowing for oil and gas leasing outside of priority greater sage grouse habitat.</p> <p>Important elements of the plan include</p> <p>1.) an agreement to prioritize oil and gas leasing outside of priority greater sage grouse habitat and strong standards for enforcing “no surface occupancy” and other protections from oil and gas leasing and development in priority sage-grouse habitat.</p> <p>2.) A commitment on the part of the State of Colorado to ensure damage to habitat is limited and, where damage can “t be avoided, that grouse habitat is restored or other habitat is improved or acquired. BLM has an obligation to avoid and mitigate harm to wildlife from energy development and other activities in grouse habitat.</p> <p>It is essential to keep the 2015 Colorado Plan intact by not making changes beyond those supported by the state and the diverse stakeholders who worked years to develop the 2015 plan. Therefore I urge BLM to honor the work by all stakeholders and maintain the plan in its current form with the exceptions mentioned above. It would be counter-productive to throw out the result of ten years of work, compromise and establishment of relationships.</p> <p>Thank you. Pauline P. Reetz Denver, Colorado</p>
CO-GRSG-1-217884	Colorado greater sage grouse management Plan intact.	Please help save the sage grouse by leaving the current plan alone. So many changes have taken place in Colorado, including unprecedented population growth, severe drought due to global warning, and loss of wildlife management funding. We are in danger of loosing this unique bird forever if there are no restrictions and rules to help save their habitat.
CO-GRSG-1-217888	Keep 2015 Colorado Plan as it is	As a member of the Colorado Wildlife Federation and Backcountry Hunters & Anglers who wishes to see public agencies make wildlife habitat a priority, I ask that the BLM make no changes to the 2015 Colorado Plan for sage grouse management beyond those supported by the state and the broadly diverse stakeholders who worked years to develop the 2015 plan. (The Plan also helps many other species that rely on sagebrush habitat.)
CO-GRSG-1-217932	Leave the 2015 greater sage grouse plans alone!	<p>Dear Bureau of Land Management,</p> <p>I urge you to leave the 2015 greater sage grouse plans alone. Nearly a decade of collaborative work by diverse interests in Colorado and the Governor resulted in a good compromise Colorado Plan in 2015 to conserve the greater sage grouse in northwest Colorado. This Plan, in conjunction with similar plans in other western states, led US Fish and Wildlife Service to determine the greater sage grouse no longer warranted becoming listed under the Endangered Species Act.</p> <p>The 2015 Colorado Plan, represented by the “No Action Alternative,” will:</p> <p>1.) Continue prioritizing oil and gas leasing outside of priority greater sage grouse habitat. Keep strong standards for enforcing “no surface occupancy” and other protections from oil and gas leasing and development in priority sage-grouse habitat.</p> <p>2.) Honor Colorado’s commitment to ensure damage to habitat is limited and, where damage can “t be avoided, that grouse habitat is restored or other habitat is improved or acquired. BLM has an obligation to avoid and mitigate harm to wildlife from energy development and other activities in grouse habitat. 3.) Keep the 2015 Colorado Plan intact by not making changes beyond those supported by the state and the broadly diverse stakeholders who worked years to develop the 2015 plan. (The Plan also helps many other species that rely on sagebrush habitat.)</p> <p>I am a Colorado Wildlife Federation member and urge you to follow the 2015 Colorado Plan.</p> <p>Sincerely, Forrest Orswell</p>

Colorado Greater Sage-Grouse Comment Submissions via ePlanning Web Form

Submission ID	Subject	Submission Text
CO-GRSG-1-217984	2015 Colorado Sage Grouse Plan	<p>Dear Sirs: Being a CWF member and great lover of the outdoors, I and my family hope you will honor Colorado’s commitment plan of 2015 for greater sage grouse and keep the BLM land intact. Please do not destrroy the habitat of the grouse and so many other animals. Do not allow any surface occupancy from gas and oil in this important area. Many hundreds of hours went into making this plan for the grouse, etc., and the importance of it for the animals and people. Please give this your strong consideration.</p> <p>Sincerely, Ken and Mary Black, Louisville, CO</p>
CO-GRSG-1-218082	2015 Colorado greater sage grouse Plan	<p>Please maintain the 2015 Colorado Plan intact.</p> <p>Do not make changes to this plan that has been negotiated between the state of Colorado and the numerous interested parties. The plan helps not only the greater sage grouse but also the other wildlife sharing that habitat.</p> <p>Colorado’s plan attempts to ensure that damage to habitat is limited or restored when necessary. The incorporated standards for protecting the habitat from oil and gas leasing and development are necessary especially in priority habitat areas.</p>
CO-GRSG-1-218137	Greater Sage Grouse Management	<p>The biggest concern we have is that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service found the Greater Sage Grouse did not merit listing because the numbers were increasing substantially, and it was obvious the management at the state and local levels was working. Basically, there was never real justification for listing the birds. As in many cases with petitions and/or lawsuits for listing, the baseline information was not accurate and therefore the initial consideration was flawed.</p> <p>That said, as with many species petitioned for listing, even when it is determined that the baseline information was not accurate, rather than simply delisting or removing the listing the standard action for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is to say the species is recovered and therefore no longer merits listing. This is followed by the requirement for the federal land management agencies to complete a recovery plan to ensure the species does not merit listing in the future. It appears this is the case with the Greater Sage Grouse. BLM and the U.S. Forest Service have completed amendments to the RMPs to manage for continued recovery of the species. Now, because the original analysis was flawed, and lawsuits from western states and local governments, these land management agencies are forced to revisit the amendments spending millions more tax dollars.</p> <p>In Colorado, CPW, even as stated in the EIS, is really responsible for managing wildlife, including Greater Sage Grouse.</p> <p>Because the conservation plans completed at the state and local levels, which included input from BLM and the U.S. Forest Service, were working, this is a total waste of money, and another bureaucratic control mechanism by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.</p> <p>Let “s do the right thing and allow the states to establish the appropriate number of birds in each population, let the wildlife management authorities work with the local land managers and landowners to ensure proper habitat management, and get a better long term result than spending millions of tax dollars to accomplish an end that was based on a flawed decision to begin with.</p>
CO-GRSG-1-218202	Colorado 2015 Plan	<p>keep colorado 2015 plan</p>
CO-GRSG-1-218386	Gunnison Sage Grouse	<p>Please leave the current cooperative plan to manage the Gunnison Sage Grouse in Colorado ALONE. This plan is the result of years of interagency coopertive planning among numerous partners in Colorado to manage this species. It is a win-win and it is working, so please leave it alone.</p>
CO-GRSG-1-218485	Greater Sage Grouse DRMP and Draft EIS	<p>I am writing to submit comments to The Greater Sage-Grouse Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment (RMPA) and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).</p> <p>These amendments and accompanying EIS are an affront to untold number of westerners who worked to craft a collaborative plan to forestall the listing of the Sage Grouse under the Endangered Species Act. More importantly, these changes push this iconic species closer to the brink of extinction, and undermines the ecological integrity of the habitat upon which hundreds of other species find the conditions that sustain their existence.</p> <p>Secretary Zinke and the current administration have chosen to ignore the best available science and the wishes of several western governors. Time and time again, lease sales are placed on lands mapped as sage grouse habitat &ndash; nearly all of the 1.3 million acres being offered for oil and gas leases in upcoming sales in Wyoming intersects with sage-grouse habitat on public lands in the state. In Colorado, 50.8 percent of oil and gas leases offered in June intersects with protected habitat in the northwestern quadrant of the state.</p> <p>Talk of compromise is a cynical dodge. Pre-settlement numbers are estimated to have been as high as 16 million; today there are less than 200,000, about 1% of their historic numbers. It is difficult to see this document as little more than another sinecure to the fossil fuel industry that the secretary has promised to satisfy those who have appointed him and to pave the way for further political ambitions. It pains me to see our public lands being despoiled and sold off to the highest bidders by the agencies charged with their protection.</p> <p>Michael Dombeck served as Acting Director of the Bureau of Land Management from 1994&ndash;1997 and was the Chief of the United States Forest Service from</p>

Colorado Greater Sage-Grouse Comment Submissions via ePlanning Web Form

Submission ID	Subject	Submission Text
		1997 to 2001 In a letter to Forest Service employees in 1998, he wrote, “Values such as wilderness and roadless areas, clean water, protection of rare species, old growth forests, naturalness – these are the reasons most Americans cherish their public lands ... First and foremost, we must be loyal to our agency “s land ethic. In fifty years, we will not be remembered for the resources we developed, we will be thanked for those we maintained and restored for future generations.”
CO-GRSG-1-218532	Support for the Colorado 2015 greater sage grouse plans	<p>As a Colorado Wildlife Federation member, I wish to add my voice to others in support of leaving the 2015 greater sage grouse plans alone (the “No Action Alternative”). A great amount of effort by diverse interests in Colorado and the Governor resulted in a good compromise Colorado Plan to conserve the greater sage grouse in northwest Colorado. This Plan, in conjunction with similar plans in other western states, led US Fish and Wildlife Service to determine the greater sage grouse no longer warranted becoming listed under the Endangered Species Act.</p> <p>The 2015 Colorado Plan, represented by the “No Action Alternative,” will continue prioritizing oil and gas leasing outside of priority greater sage grouse habitat and keep strong standards for enforcing “no surface occupancy” and other protections from oil and gas leasing and development in priority sage-grouse habitat.</p> <p>This plan will also honor Colorado’s commitment to ensure damage to habitat is limited and, where damage can “t be avoided, that grouse habitat is restored or other habitat is improved or acquired. BLM has an obligation to avoid and mitigate harm to wildlife from energy development and other activities in grouse habitat.</p> <p>Again, please keep the 2015 Colorado Plan intact by not making changes beyond those supported by the state and the diverse stakeholders who worked for years to develop it.</p>
CO-GRSG-1-218682	Colorado 2015 Combined sage grouse plan	Please do not alter the 2015 stage grouse Colorado plan. This plan was developed in cooperation of BLM and the USFWS and the Colorado Parks and Wildlife staff, with full cooperation of a diverse public wildlife and environmental interests and input. This unusual wide support is rare and deserves to be implemented without change since it represents public and private input.
CO-GRSG-1-218732	Greater Sage Grouse Conservation	I request the Sage Grouse Conservation Plan, the best model to-date of collaboration among diverse stakeholders to prevent the need to list GSG under the Endangered Species Act, be left intact, that the “no action” alternative be the preferred and recommended alternative. Not to do so, to act contrary to the 2015 Colorado Plan. would be the worst sort of breach of faith toward the individuals who have contributed tens of thousands of hours in developing the best path forward to perpetuate this species, ensure its habitat along with the many sympatrics in a manner that is ecologically and economically viable to all interests. Thank you
CO-GRSG-1-218734	greater sage grouse	Regulations currently in place need to remain in place. The attack on all environmental and conservation issues by the current administration need to be halted at every avenue possible.
CO-GRSG-1-218749	Moffat County Colorado SG Comments- 2018 plan amend.	Please see attachment from the Moffat County, Colorado,Board of County Commissioners.
CO-GRSG-1-218760	Strengthen Protections for Sage-Grouse -- 2018 Northwest Colorado Greater Sage-Grouse Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment and Environmental Impact Statement	Please see attached documents.
CO-GRSG-1-218778	Comments Re: GRSG Draft RMPA/EIS	<p>Dear Ms. Clayton,</p> <p>After nearly a decade of hard work from westerners to draft the 2015 Sage-Grouse plans, Secretary Zinke and the Department of the Interior announced major changes that undermine that compromise. This action breaks the deal that federal officials made with western states in 2015, when the plans were originally finalized, and the sage-grouse was found to be on the road to recovery.</p> <p>The health of the sage-grouse determines the survival of hundreds of species, including the golden eagle, elk, pronghorn and mule deer. As a westerner, protecting these species is important to me because I love to fish and hunt and enjoy wildness! We need to keep these western landscapes intact and with as little development, especially in sage grouse habitat.</p> <p>In Colorado the amended plans should do all they can to protect sage-grouse habitat across the west, including continue prioritizing oil and gas leasing and development away from sage-grouse habitat. The plans should maintain strong standards to enforce “no surface occupancy” and other protections from oil and gas leasing and development in sage-grouse habitat and not make changes to the plan beyond what the state and other stakeholders supported in 2015. The BLM should also honor Colorado “s commitment to avoid damage to habitat and to restore habitat where impacts are unavoidable.</p>

Colorado Greater Sage-Grouse Comment Submissions via ePlanning Web Form

Submission ID	Subject	Submission Text
		<p>Please keep the original sage-grouse management plans intact, to protect sage-grouse and the habitat that is vital to hundreds of species across the west.</p> <p>Sincerely, Kimberly Stevens Lakewood, Colorado 80214</p>
CO-GRSG-1-218779	Mesa County Comments	Thank you for your consideration of the attached comment letter.
CO-GRSG-1-218783	The Nature Conservancy comments on the BLM NW Colorado Greater Sage-Grouse Draft RMP and DEIS	The Nature Conservancy respectfully submits comments on the 2018 Northwest Colorado Greater Sage-Grouse draft RMPA and draft EIS. Please see attached document.
CO-GRSG-1-218888	Comments from The Pew Charitable Trusts	Attached please find comments from The Pew Charitable Trusts on the draft environmental impact statement proposing changes to the Bureau of Land Management “s (BLM) 2015 sage-grouse plans in Colorado.
CO-GRSG-1-218900	Northwest Co RMP - Grouse	<p>Hello,</p> <p>My name is Daly Edmunds and I’m a wildlife biologist. I moved to Colorado for the important recreational and wildlife values that the BLM public lands offer both myself and my family, as these are important to our quality of life.</p> <p>I have been closely following the sage-grouse management issue over the past 10 years, not only because of the impacts to this important umbrella species but also because of the broader ramifications management of the bird has on the sagebrush ecosystem.</p> <p>In 2015, I was really proud of the work done by Colorado and the many stakeholders - include our state agencies and Governor Hickenlooper, who recognized that collaborative conservation was what is in the best interest of our state. Given that, I’ve been really disappointed to see how policies have dramatically changed since then, to not only blatantly disregard the extensive work done by so many but also the movement towards a singular focus for our public lands. While energy development is undoubtedly an important part of the West’s economy, I am extremely disheartened to see the shift to a short-sighted extreme emphasis on energy development (with the recent mitigation changes, appearing to be encouraged without regard to impacts on other natural resources). This is not only irresponsible in the short-term, impacting a wide range of economic drivers that depend on healthy/robust landscapes, but in the long-term. These plans formed the foundation for which the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service made a not-warranted finding for sage-grouse in 2015. With this unprecedented review of so many years of work by so many stakeholders, what kind of certainty are we left with?</p> <p>My comments relating to the overall BLM process is concerning - having separate portals (6 altogether) makes it hard for the general American public in other parts of the country to participate in this process.</p> <p>Going forward, I strongly encourage the BLM to do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Maintain a net conservation gain standard. For a species like grouse, which are declining, this standard is important to ensure long-term sustainability/recovery.- Mitigation is a cornerstone of wildlife management and must be maintained, as it was also an importat tool that was relied upon for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s 2015 decision. If an area of interest contains important grouse habitat, then all efforts should be made to avoid and then minimize disturbance, in that order. IF that is not possible, then a scientifically robust and mitigation plan should be completed.- We know that grouse don’t do well with energy development so Priority Habitat Management areas in CO should be avoided by energy developers. Focus should be to develop lower priority habitat areas, to minimize negative impacts to our grouse - as recent studies confirm that oil and gas development can harm both sage-grouse habitat and life-cycle activities (which can have population impacts)- Every effort should be made to capture conservation management actions, to help inform and guide managers going forward. This is important to federal tax payers and owners of these public lands. This is part of sound planning/development, helping to determine what is effective and what isn’t.- Habitat boundary adjustments should be based on the best available science and data and be made with full transparency. <p>Thank you.</p>
CO-GRSG-1-218908	Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Plan	<p>July 31, 2018</p> <p>Dear Forest Service, BLM, and other stakeholders,</p> <p>The priority of the Sage-Grouse Conservation Plan is to conserve an iconic bird species and the habitat it depends upon for its survival in the West. The major</p>

Colorado Greater Sage-Grouse Comment Submissions via ePlanning Web Form

Submission ID	Subject	Submission Text
		<p>emphasis of this plan is conservation, not economic development. Although, if wildlife conservation could dovetail with economic development, this plan could have beneficial impacts for the birds as well as local communities. This plan was created to protect the birds without necessitating Endangered Species Act listing, which would have required a great deal more federal involvement (ESA regulations, etc.). The various stakeholders have put a great deal of time and effort into the creation of this plan already and they want it to be successful.</p> <p>Unfortunately, the currently proposed plan is even weaker than the previous one, which was put in place after consultation with stakeholders including western governors, scientists and conservationists. Further weakening of the original plan, via these proposed amendments, is a slap in the face of all interested stakeholders who have worked so hard to develop this plan to begin with. Additionally, the proposed amendments to this plan appear to be an attempt to put the wants of the gas/oil, mining, and ranching industries over the needs of our wildlife. The states and other stakeholders have an opportunity here to save an iconic species, but only if they work together with a plan that is robust enough to get the job done, namely one that increases the number of the Greater Sage-Grouse range-wide and protects all of its necessary habitat, including sagebrush focal areas.</p> <p>The announced plan revisions, namely the removal of “sagebrush focal areas” from the original conservation plan text, threatens the protections for sage-grouse on millions of acres of public lands. I do not support any proposed amendments to the Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Plan that would allow new surface disturbances or the opening of these areas (SFA “s) to new hardrock mining claims. Weakening protections would have significant consequences for sage-grouse and other wildlife, sagebrush grasslands and the western communities and economies that depend on them. Rather than wasting time on trying to weaken the federal plans, the Trump administration should consider ways to improve them. Scientists have already identified gaps and deficiencies in the current conservation strategy, and have recommended measures to strengthen conservation and management of the species:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Conserve all of the most important sage-grouse habitat, including Sagebrush Focal Areas within Priority Habitat Management Areas. As an example, winter habitat is particularly important to sage-grouse, mule deer and other wildlife, but the current federal plans fail to protect those areas from harmful land use and development. In the Sagebrush Focal Areas as listed in the original 2015 plan, federal land use plans will avoid new surface disturbance and recommend that the areas be withdrawn from new hardrock mining claims.2. Connect sage-grouse habitats. The federal government developed fifteen plans covering the sage-grouse’s eleven-state range, but failed to stitch them together into a matrix that can provide for the species across federal jurisdictions and state boundaries. It is essential that these various plans work together and with the federal plan.3. Protect sagebrush reserves. It is important, particularly in light of climate change, that land managers set aside areas both where sage-grouse are now and where they will need to go in the future; the current conservation plans fail to provide that direction.4. Reduce manageable impacts in sage-grouse habitat. Some threats to sage-grouse are difficult to manage, such as wildfire and invasive species. The federal conservation strategy should compensate for those impacts by emphasizing management of land uses that we can control, such as improperly managed livestock grazing, which contributes to unnatural fire and the spread of invasive species.5. Restore degraded sage-grouse habitat. Sage-grouse have already lost nearly half their range to agriculture and development. If there is to be any hope for the different state and federal plans to work together, this loss of habitat must cease. The federal sage-grouse conservation strategy should be updated to support active restoration of areas that can still be used by sage-grouse and other wildlife. <p>I urge you to strengthen this conservation plan, not weaken it, and make it more protective of the sage-grouse. Afterall, it is the sage-grouse that we “re all working so hard to protect. Again, I must stress that the main priority of the Sage-Grouse Conservation Plan is the protection of the current population of sage-grouse and a significant increase in the numbers of these birds over their current range throughout the 11 participating states. Any actions that weaken this plan or make it less effective will make recovery of this iconic species even more uncertain.</p> <p>Thank you for this opportunity to express my concerns.</p> <p>Sincerely, LeeAnn Bennett</p>

Colorado Greater Sage-Grouse Comment Submissions via ePlanning Web Form

Submission ID	Subject	Submission Text
CO-GRSG-1-218912	Sage-grouse plans	<p>Hi there!</p> <p>I am concerned about the dismantling of the greater sage-grouse plans in the West.</p> <p>In Colorado the amended plans should do all they can to protect sage-grouse habitat across the west, including continue prioritizing oil and gas leasing and development away from sage-grouse habitat. The plans should maintain strong standards to enforce “no surface occupancy” and other protections from oil and gas leasing and development in sage-grouse habitat and not make changes to the plan beyond what the state and other stakeholders supported in 2015. The BLM should also honor Colorado “s commitment to avoid damage to habitat and to restore habitat where impacts are unavoidable. Please keep the original sage-grouse management plans intact, to protect sage-grouse and the habitat that is vital to hundreds of species across the west.</p> <p>Sincerely, Erica Prather</p>
CO-GRSG-1-218947	Colorado First Conservation District	<p>RE: Comments to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) regarding the May 2018 Northwest Colorado Greater Sage-Grouse Draft Resource Management Plan Amendment and Environmental Impact Statement</p>
CO-GRSG-1-218949	Colorado Sage-Grouse Comments	<p>Hello,</p> <p>My name is Jacquie Earls and I moved to Colorado nearly 10 years ago. I grew up in Connecticut closely to the Audubon Society-it was a family passion. My motivation to move to Colorado was driven by my urge to get closer to nature. I didn “t want to “keep up with the jones “ In New York City.</p> <p>In in my effort to connect with Colorado, I started to invest time In what it had to offer. I was quickly anxiety ridden in knowing that this time may be limited. I recognized this change was all about to affect my life and all because of oil and gas. My aunt who has had a passion for birds our whole life was the first to inspire me about the sage-grouse. Why does energy developement have to affect my public lands exploration? I don “t want to feel rushed. I dont want to feel as if I left my aunt down and didn “t get to explore her passion.</p> <p>I encourage the BLM to maintain a net conservation gain standard.</p>
CO-GRSG-1-218950	Please do not alter Colorado's Greater Sage Grouse plans	<p>I have been a Colorado resident since 2000 and am well aware that the US Fish and Wildlife Service determined that the Greater Sage Grouse populations were in serious decline. The state of Colorado, along with many different interest groups, worked for many years to ensure that Sage Grouse management was based on scientific research and local economic impact studies. The BLM should uphold these plans, particularly the the key elements that biologists believe are necessary to avoid listing the Sage Grouse as a threatened or endangered species. Please consider well thought out, science based mitigation programs when development is unavoidable.</p> <p>The Sage Grouse is a treasure of the State of Colorado and we should do everything we can to preserve its habitat for future generations.</p> <p>Thank you, Kevin Larkin Westminster, CO</p>
CO-GRSG-1-218951	It's necessary to uphold Colorado's Greater Sage-Grouse conservation plans	<p>Living here in Colorado, I strongly oppose any efforts to weaken the conservation protections in the BLM’s sage-grouse land management plans.</p> <p>In 2010, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) determined that the Greater Sage-Grouse populations were in serious trouble and warranted protection under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).</p> <p>The state of Colorado and many stakeholders worked for many years on ensuring that sage-grouse management is based on science and good for our local economies. The plans that were agreed to in 2015 led the FWS to reverse its 2010 decision and find the future for sage-grouse was secure: a historic victory for conservation and for collaboration.</p> <p>Instead of amending the plans by weakening protections, BLM should focus on engaging communities in the decisions necessary to implement the plans as they are. Give the plans a chance to work.</p> <p>If there are any changes that experts deem necessary, these should instead be done via minor plan amendments, also known as “maintenance actions.” A complete rewrite is an unnecessary waste of federal resources, and risks upending the FWS’s 2015 finding.</p> <p>The draft plan for Colorado removes key elements that biologists believe are necessary to avoid the need for listing the species as threatened or endangered under the ESA. Specifically, the BLM should:</p> <p>* Maintain a strong “net conservation gain” standard. No net loss of habitat merely prevents additional habitat loss and is not adequate for long-term recovery.</p>

Colorado Greater Sage-Grouse Comment Submissions via ePlanning Web Form

Submission ID	Subject	Submission Text
		<p>* Good mitigation policy and practice is also one of the best opportunities to achieve sustainable development and conservation goals. Where impacts cannot be avoided or minimized, well-designed compensatory mitigation programs can achieve the multiple-use, sustained yield objectives.</p> <p>* Development on existing leases should be managed under current regulations, which limit surface occupancy and disturbance. Years of research leave no doubt that sage-grouse do not do well in close proximity to energy development. In addition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Do a better job of protecting Priority Habitat Management Areas by reducing oil/gas development impacts. New development should be prioritized outside these important population areas and strong buffers maintained around sage-grouse leks.- Restore No Surface Occupancy stipulations as mandatory for sage-grouse habitat when leasing for energy development. Allowing exceptions, in light of what we know with the science, will result in poorly planned development that negatively impacts habitat and leads to fewer birds. <p>* Improve plan monitoring and oversight, including providing training to field staff and the necessary incentives to ensure proper implementation. The plans should contain metrics by which conservation success can be measured. Conservation metrics will help in effective management of the habitat and reduce wasting personnel time and limited funds.</p> <p>* The plans contain many new provisions that serve as loopholes and exceptions to habitat protections. We need certainty that crucial habitat will be protected to ensure the species thrives into the future.</p> <p>Thank you for considering my comments.</p>